

“Don’t Be Singing That” Game Show
a comedy sketch idea by Jonathan D Steinhoff, copyright 3.9.13

SCENE:

Typical TV game show set. As BOB, the game show host explains at the start of the show, the idea is to lavishly reward contestants with cash prizes depending on how successful they are at singing songs they only partially know. Then a panel of judges decide if they feel the person came close enough to the actual words, each judge explaining what values were applied in arriving at his decision. For example:

BOB (GAME SHOW HOST)

Well, Walter, our secret spies tell us you’re not all that familiar with the songs of Englebert Humperdink.

WALTER

Spying on me, eh? Ha-ha, yes, that’s true. I think the world of his songs, I just-

BOB

Yeah, that’s what they all say! Ha-ha! Okay, great. So, the song we want you to sing for us today is Englebert Humperdink’s popular hit from long ago, “Please Release Me”.

WALTER

Gee, I only sort of know that one....

BOB

(as the music comes up in the background) And THAT is why we picked it!

WALTER

Oh, yeah. Okay, well.... here goes. **(singing along with the music)** Please release me, uh, let me, let me go, for I love someone else, so much more – no, no wait! That’s not.... no! For I can’t feel the way I did, anymore, to live in pain, I’m living in pain, pain must release me, pain would be so wrong, release me, my darling, once again. **(music fades out)**

BOB

Okay, thank you, Walter! And now the judges start judging.

WALTER

(looking at the judges writing) I’m not too, uh, sure how I did. I don’t really know that song.....

BOB

Right, we know that (boy do we know that)! Now, Walter, I see you doing what all of our contestants do, you’re looking at the judges, worrying about that pained look we all always see on the faces of our judges. That always seems to happen around here, it’s nothing to worry about! Uh-oh, Judge Michaels is getting his migraine look! We don’t always see that.) And, time is up – judges, are we ready to give our verdicts? Judge Simms?

JUDGE SIMMS

Bob, and Walter, I’ve gotta say, uh-uh, not close enough. There’s love lost in Walter’s “take” on this song, and that’s good, but when he says he wants to be released once again – no. Once again? How’s that? It’s simply not that kind of relationship, this is not supposed to be the second time he is to be released by the woman to whom he sings, it is the first time he is asking this. Completely wrong. Walter sang of a relationship between two entirely different people, certainly not the characters in Englebert Humperdink’s song.

JUDGE MICHAELS

(frenetically, bordering on hysterically) He destroyed a great song! I am completely repulsed by this, this-

BOB

Now, Judge Michaels, you have to wait for me to call on you.

JUDGE MICHAELS

(suddenly in a very calm voice) I’m sorry, Bob. Can I go now?

BOB

Certainly, of course. So Judge Michaels, what is your verdict?

JUDGE MICHAELS

(again nearly out of control, this time more sad than angry) I loved that song, but, no more.... I can no longer listen to that song's beauty, for I will only hear the way Walter sang it. Did I say, "sang it"? It was as if an insect were crawling over the body of a beautiful woman, who could do nothing lest the insect be provoked to put his-

BOB

We're going to count that as another decision against Walter. That's two judges against Walter, with only one judge's verdict remaining. Walter, as you know, even if Judge Smith, our last judge, decides in your favor, you will only receive the minimal amount of money, which is calculated by the level of emotion felt by our three judges from your singing, good or bad, in the opinion of our studio audience, as registered through devices on the arms of the chairs occupied by our studio audience, that perceived level of judge emotion then divided by other mathematical factors described in a 30-page document on our show's website. The show is not legally liable for misperceptions of levels of judge emotion on the part of studio audience members. And now, to see what her verdict actually is! Judge Smith?

JUDGE SMITH

(tears streaming down her face) Thank you, Bob! Walter, I just want to say, you don't need to sing like Englebert Humperdink! Your new song, though different, the words were, were so beautiful, it opened my eyes to a whole new world of emotion! Never have I been so transported-

BOB

Um, excuse me, Judge Smith, but the object of this wasn't to sing a beautiful song, it's about being close enough to the actual song.

JUDGE SMITH

(now completely composed) Oh. Well in that case I rule against Walter. That wasn't anything like Englebert Humperdink.

BOB

Okay, Walter! Thank you for being on our show! You've been a great contestant! When we come back-

WALTER

I wish you'd asked me to sing one I know.

BOB

Yeah, right Walter.

WALTER

I'm gonna find out who was spying on me – are you watching out there? Oh yeah, I'll figure out who knows I don't know Englebert Humperdink songs.... Let's see....

FADE OUT.